

# Practical Conversation in English 2

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Eugene J. Hall



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**Regents Publishing Company, Inc.**

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Illustrations: Janice Gaudioso

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Published by  
Regents Publishing Company, Inc.  
2 Park Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10016  
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 0-88345-439-4

# Foreword

*Practical Conversation for Intermediate Students* is the second of a series of three textbooks that are intended to give students of English as a second or foreign language more experience in the use of their new language. Each lesson begins with a dialogue that emphasizes a particular structural pattern or group of related patterns. The situations in the dialogues are practical not only because they present structures and vocabulary but also because they are about the daily concerns of people who work. Each dialogue is followed by several comprehension questions that give the students more practice in speaking.

The next section of the lesson singles out for special practice words or phrases that occur in everyday use. Most of these expressions occur in the dialogues, and the additional examples are intended to make their meaning and use clearer. They are high-frequency items or expressions in popular usage that are useful for intermediate students who want to use English in real-life situations.

The phrases for everyday use are followed by a group of practice sentences which give examples of the structural patterns that are covered in the lesson. The sentences for practice also introduce new vocabulary items. After the practice sentences there is a brief explanation of the structural patterns of which the sentences are examples.

A section on pronunciation follows the note on structural patterns. In this book, contrasts between the various vowel sounds in English are introduced. Exercises on the structural patterns in each lesson are given next. These exercises are of course intended for practice on the formal elements of the patterns.

The last section of each lesson gives additional practice on conversation. A number of questions are suggested that the teacher can ask to or about the students in the class. The questions use the classroom environment and the experience of the students to use the patterns that have been introduced in each lesson. The students should give real answers—answers based on their own experience and observation—to the

questions. Since each class and each student are different, the questions given in the book are only suggestions. Teachers can prepare similar questions that are based on the real conditions of their own classes.

In teaching *Practical Conversation*, teachers should use the aural-oral techniques that have been common practice in language teaching for many years. With the dialogues, work should begin with a listening practice, during which the students listen with their books closed while the teacher reads the dialogue to them. The listening practice should then be repeated with books open. Any questions about meaning should be answered at this point, and teachers should use the quickest and most effective method to make meaning clear. After this the teacher should have the students as a group repeat the dialogue, with attention to pronunciation and phrasing. Next, the teacher should have individual students repeat sentences from the dialogue. The students should then go on to reading the dialogue in pairs to give the feel of an actual conversation. The teacher can also ask the students to memorize each dialogue as a homework assignment. Then at the next meeting of the class, pairs of students can be called on to act out the dialogue.

The comprehension questions should be given with books open, and the teacher should be prepared to prompt and help the students not only with their answers but also with pronunciation and phrasing. The comprehension questions can also be used as a paired activity, with one student asking a question and another giving the answer, until all the students in the class have had the opportunity to participate. In addition, the students can be asked to write out the answers as a homework assignment.

Both the phrases for everyday use and the sentences for practice should be presented by means of a listening practice, followed by answering any questions about meaning, and then by repetition by the class as a group, repetition by individual students, and reading by individual students. The notes on structure give the formal features of the patterns that are being presented. The teacher should resist the temptation to make them the basis for long lectures on grammar and should instead present them as briefly as possible in the simplest and most direct way that the students can grasp.

The pronunciation practice in this book presents contrasts between the different vowel sounds in English. The words in the minimal pairs are given only for practice on the sounds and not as vocabulary items. The teacher should present this material first with a listening practice, reading across, that is, *it-eat*, *hit-heat*, etc., and then with group and individual repetition. The repetition can be followed by a discrimination practice in which the teacher reads words at random from either column and asks the students to identify the sound they have heard.

The exercises should also be presented first with a listening practice in which the teacher gives both cues and responses. Then the teacher should give the cues while individual students give the responses. If the students have difficulty with a particular pattern or exercise, the teacher may want to give additional preparation through repetition by the class as a group or by individual students. If time permits, the exercises can also be used for practice by pairs of students, with one student giving a cue and another the response. The exercises can also of course be given for written work, preferably as a homework assignment.

As noted before, the questions given in the final conversation section of each lesson are only suggestions. Teachers who want to make up additional questions should prepare them before class to make sure that they include only patterns that the students have already covered. Such questions can be used to enlarge the students' vocabulary with items that relate to the classroom or their daily lives.

One of the most difficult problems in teaching a language is to let the students hear and speak the everyday language. It is hoped that *Practical Conversation* will help to give the students the opportunity to use their new language with greater ease.



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# Lesson

# 1

## A▷ Dialogue: Reporting for Work

Laurie: Excuse me. Can you help me please?

Ken: Yes, what is it?

Laurie: Is this the correspondence section?

Ken: Yes, it is.

Laurie: Good, then I'm in the right place. I'm looking for Ms. Romero.

Ken: You're early. The office doesn't open till nine o'clock. It's only a quarter to nine now.

Laurie: Oh, is it that early? I'm reporting for work today, and I was a little anxious to get here, I guess.

Ken: Are you a typist?

Laurie: Yes, I am.

Ken: Oh, then you're my replacement. My name's Ken White.

Laurie: My name's Laurie Fisher.

Ken: Sylvia will be glad to see you. We have a lot of work.

Laurie: Is it very difficult?

Ken: Oh no, you'll learn it all in a couple of weeks.

Laurie: I hope so. I'm a little nervous this morning.

Ken: Don't worry. Here, I have a key. Let's go on inside. It's more comfortable than standing out here.

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

1. What section is Laurie looking for?
2. Who is she looking for?
3. What time does the office open?
4. What time is it now?
5. Why is Laurie early?

6. Is she a typist or a programmer?
7. Whose replacement is she?
8. Why will Sylvia be glad to see her?
9. How long will it take Laurie to learn the work?
10. What does Ken have? What does he want to do? Why?

## **B▷ Phrases for everyday use**

### ***Excuse me.***

Excuse me. Is this the accounting office?

Excuse me please. Where's the post office?

### ***till/until***

We have to work until six tonight.

We have to work till six tonight.

The store is open until nine thirty on Thursday.

The store is open till nine thirty on Thursday.

### ***a little***

I feel a little sick today, but I can still go to work.

The exam was a little difficult, but I passed it.

### ***a couple of***

She's going on a business trip. She'll be away from the office for a couple of days. She'll be back after two or three days.

There were only a couple of people in the office. I only saw two or three typists at work.

### **hope so/think so**

Is it going to be a nice day?

I hope so.

Are you going to get a better job?

I hope so.

Has Mrs. Devore read the report yet?

I think so.

Is the store open until nine thirty tonight?

I think so.

## **C▷ Sentences for practice**

1. Is he late this morning?  
Yes, he is. He's late this morning, and he was late yesterday too.
2. Was he late the day before? No, he wasn't.
3. Is she busy this afternoon?  
Yes, she is. She's busy this afternoon, and she was busy this morning too.
4. Was she busy yesterday? No, she wasn't.
5. Are you on vacation this week?  
Yes, I am. I'm on vacation this week, and I was on vacation last week too.
6. Were you on vacation the week before last? No, I wasn't.
7. Is it sunny today?  
Yes, it is. It's sunny today, and it was sunny yesterday.
8. Was it sunny the day before yesterday? No, it wasn't.
9. Are you sick tonight?  
Yes, we are. We're sick tonight, and we were sick last night too.
10. Were you sick the night before last? No, we weren't.
11. Am I early?  
Yes, you are. You're early this morning, and you were early yesterday morning too.
12. Was I early the morning before too? No, you weren't.

13. Are they in the conference room now?  
Yes, they are. They're in the conference room now, and they were there an hour ago.
14. Were they in the conference room two hours ago? No, they weren't.

## **D ▷ The present and past tenses of to be**

1. The forms for the present and past tenses of *to be* are

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
I am (I'm)	I was
he is (he's)	he was
she is (she's)	she was
it is (it's)	it was
you are (you're)	you were
we are (we're)	we were
they are (they're)	they were

2. *You* is both singular and plural. *They* is the plural for *he*, *she*, and *it*.
3. The contracted forms of the present tense are generally used in conversation
4. Yes-no questions are formed by placing the verb before the subject.

He was late yesterday.



Was he late yesterday?

5. Negatives are formed by placing *not* after the verb. The contractions *isn't*, *aren't*, *wasn't*, and *weren't* are generally used both in conversation and in writing. The negative form with *am*, however, is not contracted.

I'm not a file clerk.

## E▷Pronunciation

Practice the difference between these two sounds. The words given here are only for practice on the sounds.

[ɪ]	[i]	[ɪ]	[i]
it	eat	sit	seat
hit	heat	sick	seek
bit	beat	slip	sleep

## F▷Exercises

1. Make complete sentences with the present tense of *to be*. Use the contracted forms when possible.

Example: she/Ken's replacement → *She's Ken's replacement.*

- a. the office/open
  - b. he/a file clerk
  - c. she/very careful with her work
  - d. the letters/on your desk
  - e. you/on time
  - f. we/students
  - g. the sales men and women/in the conference room
  - h. I/programmer
2. Make complete sentences with the past tense of *to be*.  
Example: I/absent yesterday → *I was absent yesterday.*
- a. she/on vacation last week
  - b. we/busy yesterday
  - c. it/cold yesterday
  - d. the typists/at their desks all morning
  - e. I/sick yesterday
  - f. you/late again this morning
  - g. he/at the office all day Saturday
  - h. the letters/in her hold-box

3. Change the sentences in Exercises 1 and 2 to yes-no questions.

Example: She's Ken's replacement. —▷ *Is she Ken's replacement?*

4. Change the sentences in Exercises 1 and 2 to the negative.

Example: She's Ken's replacement. —▷ *She isn't Ken's replacement.*

## **G▷ Conversation**

*Ask these questions to and about the students in the class.*

1. What's your name? .....
2. What's his/her name? .....
3. What time is it now? .....
4. Is it hot or cold? .....
5. Is it sunny or cloudy? .....
6. Where are you now? .....
7. Where's your book/pen/pencil? .....
8. Where's his/her  
book/pen/pencil? .....
9. Where were you yesterday at this  
time? .....
10. Was it hot or cold yesterday? .....



11. Was it sunny or cloudy yesterday? .....
12. Were you early or late today? .....
13. Was he/she early or late today? .....
14. Were you early or late yesterday? .....
15. Was he/she early or late  
yesterday? .....